



A DISCOURSE,
ON THE ASSASSINATION OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

BY REV. WILLIAM GOODWIN.

DEATH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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ON THE ASSASSINATION OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, APRIL 14, 1865.

DELIVERED AT

NORTH COLEBROOK, CONN., APRIL 23, 1865,

BY REV. WILLIAM GOODWIN,

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"Sent, it would seem, to do
His work, and perish too."

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THE following Discourse was written in haste, about the time of the "Minister's moving," yet, by request, it is given to the public with few amendments.

The chapter on *the great source of violence* in our land, which was omitted for the sake of brevity when the discourse was delivered, will be found in its original place, according to the request.

As circumstances did not permit its preparation or delivery till some days after the sad event it memorializes, my chief design has been to improve the occasion in pointing out the guilty causes that have filled our land with violence and blood, and to warn against breakers just ahead, that we may be wafted on our only safe course.

DISCOURSE.

TEXT—Habakkuk I : 2, 3, 4.

“O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance! for spoiling and violence are before me; and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore, the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.”

It is always painful to the pure in heart to look upon violence and iniquity. God's ancient prophet would have rejoiced in the purity and prosperity of his people, so that his heart would no more be saddened and sickened with every day's report of wrong and outrage. That favored nation was backsliding—drifting towards breakers that were to dash in pieces their ship of state, and the body politic was to sink into oblivion. A pall of darkness was fast settling down upon them. The prophet's dark picture reveals *iniquity and grievance, spoiling and violence, strife and contention*—the law is slacked, or inoperative—not rigidly enforced; judgment does not go forth, or, justice is not administered; but injustice—wrong judgment proceedeth; and the wicked encompass about the righteous—ready to assault the defenders of righteous law and order.

It does not need a very vivid imagination to see in this description a likeness of our own land. And I have often been surprised, in pondering upon certain passages, to see the analogy that subsists between that nation and ours; how the Scriptures applying to the one, afford rich instruction and suggestions to the other, as if written expressly for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come. The

persecutions which resulted in their passage across the sea into the favored land ; the blessings of God ; the rapid increase of resources and population ; the promises and threatenings and admonitions—all seem to have at least a secondary application to us, as though they were a kind of type of us, set forth as a beacon light, that we might be guided safely, and not founder on the same breakers.

Perhaps, however, these resemblances appear partially because the workings of the human heart are the same ; or rather because the operations of the government of a great and holy God are uniform.

1. Their government was more like ours than most are aware of. We say, their's was a Theocracy—God governed. So He should rule in the councils of our nation ; and professedly we are founded on the principles of religion and God's law. That people was a species of Democracy, organized on the principles of civil equality, with no privileged class. "One law was to be to the home born and unto the stranger"—the laws of justice and equality to be administered as promulgated by God through the prophets or ministers of religion. If our laws harmonize in spirit with the law God has given us, as they ought, we shall be in one sense a Theocracy, and in another a Democracy, as they were. It was not pleasing to God that they should choose a king ; yet after he was chosen, they were still a Theocracy, but had lost the Democratic or Republican form of government. The great thing we need in our government is a fuller recognition of God and the principles of righteousness. It was the primitive plan of the Puritans to have our laws founded on the Laws of God. The instruction of the General Court of Massachusetts Colony to the committee appointed to frame laws for the commonwealth was, "As near the law of God as they can be." Some one has said, "They builded more grandly than they knew." This may be in a measure true of New England and other states stamped with her maternity ; but if they had adhered more closely to the inspired rule in some, especially the Southern States, they would have builded more grandly, and rebel-

lion and violence would not have toppled the fair fabrics of those Commonwealths into ruin.

2. Another thing we observe as brought to view in God's word respecting that nation. *The Prophets, or those that dispensed His word, were accustomed to cry unto Him in view of public or political sins*, pointing them out and denouncing them as crimes against God and the *higher law*, as well as suicidal to themselves. "Cry aloud, spare not," says God, "lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." Although often commanded by corrupt men to preach smooth things, or hold their peace altogether, and persecuted for inculcating righteousness in the midst of iniquity, yet if they, as the expounders of God's will and word—as watchmen on the walls, should fail to impart correct instructions, the blood of the guilty would stain their own skirts.

And in a republic where the people govern, should not the principles of religion and righteousness be inculcated and infused into the whole body politic? Does not the very nature of the office of a minister of religion, as an ambassador of God, make it binding upon him to press home the duties his Sovereign has enjoined, to the heart of every man in every relation in life, social, civil, political? to apply the line and plummet, the measuring rule of God's law, to individuals, and to organized bodies, the constituent members of which are responsible, as individuals, for the combined acts of these organizations? Not to enlighten men concerning duty is to prove recreant to our most sacred trusts.

When the people are engaged in political party strife, and the smoke and dust on the arena of conflict so blind their eyes that duty is bedimmed, should they not welcome the counsel of one who is virtually out of the conflict, and has no selfish political ends to gain, and whose impartial eye, in a purer, higher atmosphere, has a better opportunity of seeing what will exalt a nation and call down the blessings of heaven? Political papers will falsify; *political platforms*, like drifting sand before the wave, are constantly changing with the popular tide, many planks thereof experiencing a revolution every new campaign,

if the whole platform is not turned upside down, to secure victory. But the principles of God's word, which he that ministers at the altar should inculcate, are true and changeless. Securely moored by the inspired oracles, our ship of state lies in peace and safety in her haven of rest.

For a minister to meddle with what is commonly called *politics*, where no principle is at stake—to engage in party squabbles for office, *for the loaves and fishes*—to advocate men and not principles—to concern himself about commerce and tariff and the collection of revenues and postal arrangements, is to fall on a level with those who make politics a trade. But there is a purer, higher, holier grade of politics than this, involving the great principles of government and of righteousness; and the happiness of unborn millions. The Charter of equal rights should be secured beyond the grasp of the tyrant, justice hold the scales of her balances equal, the principles of Democracy, humanity and religion be guarded with Argus' eyes, not only by the teachers of religion, but by every Christian and patriot.

What ails our country? Distracted because religion has not restrained our politics. Who says, "Don't mix religion and politics," but the politician who advocates wrong? Divorce them, and democratic institutions give way under the strain of ungodliness. Men cannot govern themselves without the wholesome restraint of Christianity: no Republic on earth can stand without it; she will founder amidst tumultuous waves, or sink in the tide of tyranny, or relapse into a military or slaveholding despotism. The leaven of religion must be largely diffused through the body politic, or liberty must expire. Men must be taught to regard religiously the rights of their fellow men. Take religion from a republic, and you disembowel it—emasculate it; you leave merely an empty shell to be crushed by the first blow of adversity. Our ship has barely escaped wreck in the recent storm.

Christian brother, carry your religion into politics; let it enlighten and regulate you there. Step up to the ballot box and vote, and act in the fear of God and for the welfare of

your country; "do all to the glory of God." To the Bible rather than to a political paper is the best place to go for political duty. I say these things as tending to remedy such violence as our country has recently witnessed. Religion is a practical thing, and should enter into all the duties of life, to sweeten and sanctify. The minister should inculcate this, and expose and oppose every political wrong, as the *worst of wrongs*, inasmuch as it is organized wickedness, emboldening and encouraging the mass in crime, and under which they take shelter. "Meddle not with this sin," says the evil doer, "it is a political one." Does it flee to politics then as its city of refuge, and lay hold of the horns of the altar, claiming protection from the Avenger of blood-guiltiness? The wise minister will follow and slay it there, as Solomon did Joab.

Suppose a political party should arise whose object should be to burn the Bible, and suppress religion; could they claim that these things had become political questions, and for the minister to advocate religion, was to advocate party politics, and defile his sacerdotal robes? Suppose a political party advocate Slavery or Intemperance, should the minister be prohibited from preaching Righteousness, Temperance and a Judgment to come? Or, suppose the laws of most States declare certain married parties divorced whom the law of God still binds in holy wedlock with no right to marry another, (and this supposition is fact,) should not the scribe instructed in the word declare His law and rebuke its infraction, though it has become a political subject? On an occasion like the present, it is well for the Pastor to notice recent occurrences at the capitol, moralizing upon them, and showing the causes and cure of such shameful violence. Now this is political, but it is his legitimate sphere, because more questions are involved. Religion then cannot and should not keep aloof from politics. They should be handmaids one to the other—twin brothers to bless and raise our race. We give politics their full play, rendering to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, demanding, in return, full play to the exercise of religion, that there may be rendered to God the things that are God's. If they come into collision,

religion has the first right to the track ; nothing must interfere with its prerogatives, for it is of God.

3. A larger infusion of religious principle into the heart of this nation might have saved us from the recent disgraceful violence done to our officers of government. Our chief magistrate is shot down in the midst of a large crowd in the theatre, where he had reluctantly gone after urgent solicitations ; the assassin leaps down upon the platform, as his only way of escape—flourishes a dagger defiantly, and exclaims, *sic semper tyrannis*, and adds, “The South is avenged.” Rushing out the back way, he leaps upon a horse standing in readiness and escapes. The Secretary of State, suffering from a recent accident, is attacked on his couch with a knife by Lewis Payne Powell, and he and his son who was assaulted at the entrance of the room, both dangerously wounded. Nothing but the earnest struggles of Seward’s faithful nurse, the soldier Robinson, who was wounded with two others (five in all) prevented the Secretary’s throat from being cut so as to produce instant death.

Since Nullification entered the head and heart of the South, she has talked of disunion, rebellion, the overthrow of our government and a Southern Confederacy ; meanwhile, scenes of violence have been rapidly on the increase, till she had worked herself into such a phrenzy that the whole culminated in the foulest treason the world ever saw. Keitt and Rhett both acknowledged that this had been maturing for more than thirty years. . . . Nullification made an effort to trample on the authority of the government about the time Gen. Jackson was inaugurated. Bold, prompt, patriotic, he threatened with the traitor’s death any who should not instantly desist from their defiance of law ; and the roar of that lion-like voice drowned the clamor of insurrection. Their pretended grievance then was, “The oppressive operation of the Tariff.” “But,” says Jackson, “the tariff was only the *pretext*, and disunion and a *Southern Confederacy* the real object. The next pretext will be the negro or slavery question.” Prophetic words ! By violence and threats they have been pushing on to the great rebellion, till assaults on innocent and honored citizens even in our capital

became rife. I have no doubt the Presidents, Harrison and Taylor, were both poisoned. I thought so then, and subsequent events render it almost certain.*

In the hotel poisoning case there was a blunder, and it became known that poison was somehow administered; and those that died at the North had symptoms strikingly similar to those seen in the two Presidents. Observe further, that both were men who "knew no North nor South;" while those who took their places pursued an opposite policy, carrying out the plans of the South. And I confess that I am not without fears that in Lincoln's death liberty will suffer loss. The South had a reason in this case undoubtedly, why one was taken and the other left. I believe Stephen A. Douglass, having the same symptoms, died in the same way. His peculiar position, as a leader of the Democratic party, made him one of the most efficient champions against the Rebellion. At the inauguration of our lamented President, as he presented his plan for suppressing the Rebellion and administering the affairs of State, Douglass exclaimed "I shall support such an administration." He denounced the Rebellion as Treason, *the crime of crimes*. Hear his patriotic words, "Whoever is not prepared to sacrifice party organizations and platforms on the altar of his country, does not deserve the support or countenance of honest people." "There are only two sides to the question. Every man must be for the United States or against it. There can be no neutrals in this war. Only patriots, or traitors. America wants no friends, acknowledges the fidelity of no citizens, who after the war is declared, condemns the justness of her cause, and sympathizes with the enemy. All such are traitors in their hearts." Such sentiments rendered him most obnoxious to Southern hate; and as he was raising the tide of a great party, and of the great West against them, I believe traitorous hands, having purposely defeated his election, administered the deadly dose. Little do we consider the terrible tragedy of violence they have been playing. The bare recital of their

* Since writing the above, authentic accounts state that the South boasted previous to Lincoln's death, that they had put two Presidents out of the way, and should soon another.

barbarities during the present rebellion sickens us. Only to mention their treatment of our soldiers in Libby and Andersonville prisons, 60,000 of whom perished, mostly by maltreatment, under the knowledge and supervision of Southern leaders, others being disabled by starvation that they might be exchanged for their able bodied men, well fed by us—their bloody schemes of plunder, and attempts to burn our larger cities, which, if successful, would have involved a fearful loss of life; the murder of our soldiers after surrender; the advocating in some of their leading papers of extensive poisoning operations, and a dark catalogue of similar atrocities; only to mention them, without dwelling on their details, almost chills us with horror. Surely there is *spoiling and violence; they have raised up strife; they have encompassed about the righteous.*

The Richmond Enquirer many years ago said, “No State or set of States has a right to withdraw itself from this Union of its own accord. Only the power that knit us together can unknit us.” It closes by saying, “Until consent has been obtained, any attempt to dissolve the Union, or obstruct the efficacy of the constitutional laws, is treason—treason to all intents and purposes.” Alexander H. Stephens, Vice President of Rebellion, lifted up his warning voice against secession at the outset; and after predicting the wide and desolating ruin that would inevitably follow that act, he adds, “Pause, I entreat you, and consider for a moment what reasons you can give that will even satisfy yourselves in calmer moments, what reasons you can give to your fellow sufferers in the calamity that it will bring. What reasons can you give to the nations of the earth to justify it? They will be the calm and deliberate judges in the case; and to what cause as an overt act, can you point on which to rest the plea of justification? What right has the North assailed? What interest of the South has been invaded? What justice has been denied? What claim, founded in justice and right, has been withheld?” After putting these pointed questions and other home thrusts he closes by challenging an answer. Gov. Pickens of South Carolina, in an interview with Lieut. Talbot before the attack on Fort Sumpter, admitted *the South had no cause of complaint, but the leaders manufactured grievan-*

ces to inflame the people. Yet after their pride and violence had culminated in rebellion against the most indulgent Government to them, which they boast they have ruled for the last fifty years, and which they attempted to destroy, but failed after such a fearful slaughter, a plot was laid by the South to assassinate some of the officers of the Government, or kidnap and confine them in some place, and liberate them from concealment only by compromise.

4. We should be an unfaithful moralizer on passing events, and unfaithful to God, did we not inquire into the source of this spirit of violence. Among God's ancient people, we find the sin that more especially provoked the anger of heaven, and hastened their doom, was oppression. It always engenders the spirit of violence. In our own land, it is very evident that the "sum of all villanies," as Wesley calls it, has fostered pride and dueling, dissensions and bloodshed. Hear Jefferson, the Apostle of Democracy, on this point. "There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose rein to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities." But, much that he says of like import, we must omit.

In the "Crescent City" stands a colossal statue of Gen. Jackson. One inscription appears on the granite pillar; and, as if regarded even by a slave-holding community as the most exalted and immortal words he ever spake, the Statesman is represented as giving utterance to them as follows: "If I could be instrumental in eradicating this deepest stain, Slavery, from the character of our country, I would not exchange the proud satisfaction which I should enjoy for the honor of all the triumphs ever decreed to the most successful conqueror."

In 1773 George Mason wrote to the legislature of Virginia, "The laws of impartial Providence may avenge our injustice upon our posterity." He has done it! In the same year Patrick Henry said of Slavery, "A serious view of this subject gives a gloomy prospect to future times." Again: "We would transmit to posterity our abhorrence of Slavery." Madison held that where Slavery exists, "*the republican theory becomes fallacious.*" He further says, "Slavery is the greatest evil under which the nation labors, a portentous evil, an evil moral, political, and economical -- a sad blot on our free country." And in old age he groaned out, "No satisfactory plan has yet been devised for taking out the stain." God has revealed one! Washington says, "It is among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law." Surrounded by the evil in his own beloved State, he says again, "Slavery is a most blighting curse in Virginia." He sealed his testimony by the liberation of his slaves. Franklin says, "We should march up to the very verge of the Constitution to destroy the traffic of human flesh." How changed just before the Rebellion! Buchanan gravely proposed to alter the constitution in favor of Slavery. Hear John Leland, the distinguished Baptist minister, who earnestly advocated Democratic principles; who was conversant with the compatriots of the Revolution, with Jefferson (to whom he presented the enormous Cheshire cheese.) and others who lived in Virginia before and after the Revolution, dabbling pretty deeply in that part of politics pertaining to righteousness and liberty, and a leader among the Baptists in Virginia, before whom he presented a Resolution in 1789, a few words of which I will quote. "Resolved, that slavery is a violent deprivation of the rights of nature, and inconsistent with a Republican Government." In his Virginia chronicle published in 1790, he says, "The whole scene of Slavery is pregnant with enormous evils. On the Master's side, pride, haughtiness, domination, cruelty, deceit and indolence; on the side of the Slave, ignorance, servility, fraud, perfidy and despair." Thus he proceeds, denouncing oppression with the true Democratic ring, and finally closing

by invoking the ministers and saints of the Most High. "Let your prayers, your ardent prayers," says he, "ascend to the throne of God incessantly, that he may pour the blessing of freedom upon the poor blacks."

Did time permit, we might prolong such quotations from primitive patriots to almost any extent. Although slaveholders, or conversant with the "peculiar institution," they express the greatest abhorrence towards the evil.

A southern lady, daughter of the accomplished Judge Grimke of South Carolina, says, "No one who has not been an integral part of a slave-holding community, can have any idea of its abominations. It is a whited sepulchre, *full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.*" Other southern writers bear similar testimony. Some one has said, that, for every drop of sweat and blood wrung from the oppressed, sweat and blood would be wrung from us; which seems to have been rapidly fulfilling for a few years past.

Hear Jefferson again: "And can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed their only firm basis—a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God,—that they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever." Similar overflowings of his full heart I must omit. Disguise it as we may, Slavery has incensed a God of justice, and we are now reaping the legitimate consequences of a stupendous wrong. As Jefferson feared and suggested, it is going out in blood; God has "given us blood to drink, for we are worthy." What was spoken of God's ancient people is applicable to us: "The people of the land have used oppression."

5. Allow me to introduce what I have to say for our country's future welfare, with another quotation from Jefferson. "And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who permitting one half of the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into ene-

mies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the *amor patriæ* (love of country) of the other."

If the next paragraph in our history after the Rebellion shall be the total extinction of slavery, the welfare of our nation depends much on the future history of those that have been bondmen, composing a majority in some of the Southern States. Our past oppressions have been punished by the shedding of our most precious blood; and the retributions of the same God will visit us for future injustice. A writer in the Christian Index, a Southern paper, says of them, among other good things: "Our responsibility to them does not cease because they are no longer our property; and if disappointed in our hope of gain from them, we treat them with unkindness and neglect, God will be their avenger." Shall this love of country Jefferson speaks of be fostered by granting to these millions equal rights and privileges? by making them intelligent freemen, exercising the elective franchise on condition of certain qualifications serving to incite to intelligence and virtue? Or shall we crush their rising aspirations, and make them feel that the white man is their enemy, in the way of their upward progress, to feel their vengeance if ever their right hand shall be strong enough? (which Jefferson suggests may possibly be in the Providence of God.)

Gov. Oglesby of Illinois, who is a Kentuckian by birth, in his annual message, answers the question, What is to become of the Negro? as follows. "He can labor, he can learn, he can fight, improve, and aspire, and if, after we shall have tried as long to make him a useful freeman, as we have a useless slave, we shall fail and he shall fail, there will be time enough left in which to solve this persistent question." He, and the poor whites South in the same darkness and ignorance, must be raised, or the very foundation of our Democratic institutions becomes rotten. Who does not know that if you elevate the lower class of society you elevate the whole nation? Failing to carry out the heaven-born principle of lifting up the lowly, we fall by our own suicidal hand.

The Autocrat of Russia understands that the elevation of ignorant vassals to be the intelligent agencies of his empire, is to add so much to the power of his government—is to transform weights of weakness to pillars of strength, and he has knocked the shackles from millions. Certainly we ought to understand this great principle, and feel that when we raise up the ignorant and benighted to an intelligent participation in the duties of a good Government, granting them the boon of the blessings of liberty and equal rights, which is their birth-right, in harmony with the Declaration of Independence framed by Jefferson's own hand and heart, we thereby add so much strength to our nation. Some represent this *patrimony of liberty* as belonging exclusively to themselves, as a peculiarly privileged race, and as though the bestowment of these privileges upon others was like giving away a material patrimony; *the more there is given, the less there is left*. Can such sordid narrow views find place even in the most selfish heart? The opposite is true. The more bountifully these blessings are diffused, the greater our enjoyment of them and the more secure they are. As in religion, the growth within is always in proportion to what we impart, so the flame of liberty burns brighter in the breast of him that kindles and communicates it with the breath of love. It adds fuel to the flame. After the Rebellion had forced our late President to proclaim liberty to the captives, as a necessary and constitutional measure for the preservation of our Government, his large heart leaped for joy at the thought that the millions that had groaned in bitter bondage might be raised to the ranks of intelligent freemen.

6. Another part of the picture the Prophet draws, we must not fail to notice. *The law is slackened and judgment doth never go forth*; and as a result of this, *therefore wrong judgment proceedeth*. Whenever the reins of law are loosened, and judgment condemning the guilty is not given, then unjust decisions will harass the innocent. When conscience and the sense of justice are weak, there is always a morbid effeminacy about administering the penalty of the law. The criminal is regarded as simply unfortunate, and his great tendency to crime is made

proportionably to diminish his moral obligations; so crime goes unwhipped and the innocent suffer violence. Mercy is considered a divine attribute; but it happens to be exercised only toward the guilty; and justice is regarded as a superannuated attribute. It is said, "A God all mercy were a God unjust." It is certainly unjust for us to take away the defense of the law from the righteous. Law is something more than good advice; it implies a penalty. For the sake of argument allow me to illustrate. The death penalty is annulled, forsooth, because life is so precious. But, by so much the more is the guilt of the murderer increased who has taken a precious life. The argument for the *value of life* is just as good on the other side if you increase it ten-fold: yea, better, inasmuch as the life of the murdered is of more value than that of the murderer which is forfeited. The rule of God's law is, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." I know this is laid aside in the printed documents of some of our politicians, as pertaining to the Jewish code which was to be done away. But it happened to be promulged long before the Jewish nation had existence, as one of the fundamental laws of this world. *No satisfaction was to be taken for the life of the murderer.* But is it not said, "Thou shalt not kill?" yes, *and whosoever did was surely to be put to death.* Taking life as deserved punishment by judicial proceeding is not murder. The Magistrate or Executive simply causes a righteous law to be enforced. The same voice that forbids killing says, "Ye shall stone him with stones that he die."

It is not my design here to argue in favor of hanging or stoning, but to apply this reasoning for the execution of good laws in our government. It is evident that law has been too much slacked in our nation; its majesty and force have not been felt; it became so inoperative that an appeal to the sword was necessary. Treason was boldly talked—Sumners were assaulted—mob violence resorted to with impunity. We see the result. Long ago laws should have been enforced. God has taken vengeance into his own hands. Brooks and his Uncle, Butler, both died sudden and painful deaths soon after the murderous assault on Sumner. Booth, who assassinated our Presi-

dent, is shot after great suffering. Payne and others are arrested to be hung, and the South that *has taken the sword, has perished with the sword* to a great extent, and after much suffering their land is desolate. If laws can be executed in no other way, they must be enforced by the sword. And our soldiers simply gave themselves up to the Government to sustain it, that the hope of the world should not be extinguished, and our ship of state go down freighted with the liberties and happiness of those who shall come after us, as well as our own. If defending our country by force of arms when she is attacked, or quelling Rebellion, or preventing a division which would result in the establishment of a hostile nation on our borders with no natural boundary line between us, thus entailing perpetual war, is killing or murder, then the judge who condemns the murderer is a murderer; and we must advocate the absurdity of a non-resistant Government, and all punishment is wicked revenge; or at least so soon as wickedness becomes so heinous as to combine and offer resistance, we must submit rather than fight. This would be offering the highest premium to the most culpable and wide-spread wickedness.

So far as my own person is concerned, I am almost a non-resistant in theory. But if my family is assaulted, who look to me as their protector, I must try to defend them, or I deserve no friends. And the grander the object for which these sacrifices are made, and the farther they are removed from self, the more unselfish and sublime the act. For a citizen to jeopardize his life for his country, is noble and patriotic. Shooting down an enemy that has aimed a blow at her heart, is a necessity which the invader forces upon him. As a building is removed when a city is on fire, to prevent the spread of the devouring element, so those must be removed who would fan the fires of treason; not through individual vengeance, but as a public act, on the responsibility of the Government that has a right to call her citizens to her defense. What is the value of a life that has been forfeited by becoming an agent for her overthrow, when compared with her existence and the blessings she holds? The hand that is put forth to overthrow her altars must be smitten down.

When laws become slacked, it is a sign of tottering weakness—of degeneracy and decay, and that the sense of justice is fast fading away. Laws must be executed, or mob violence will wipe everything fair from the face of the earth. The executive is bound by oath to preserve our institutions, and execute our laws. All can see the difference between the lawfully constituted administration of justice to the guilty, and that personal violence done to the innocent which the other is calculated to prevent.

7. I believe our honored Magistrate was an honest man, endeavoring faithfully but mildly to execute the laws of the land. Douglass his rival said, "Lincoln is the honestest man I ever knew." If "An honest man is the noblest work of God," what must an honest politician be! True he has been found fault with by men of all parties, but as his feelings are represented in a contradictory light, perhaps he has observed the golden mean in the administration of affairs as well as any one could in the difficult task of guiding the ship of state through the perilous storm—"the great trouble," as he was accustomed to call it. His fondest anticipations had begun to be realized—the ship was gliding into the quiet haven of peace, when suddenly the news flashed over the magnetic wires that Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. We believe he was fitted for a higher seat than he occupied here,—a seat in the abodes of the blessed. A gentleman related in a Sabbath School Convention in Massachusetts, that as he was about to visit Washington, a little girl requested him to ask the President if he were a Christian. When there, he sought an interview and told him the message the little girl sent. Lincoln buried his face in his hands and wept; then he replied, "When I lost my child I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and there beheld the brave ones who had died in defense of their country, I gave my heart to Christ—I am a Christian."

Mild and lenient as he would have been to the South, they have lost a real friend; and our whole land, at least every loyal heart in it, mourns. His hopeful, cheerful nature sometimes almost gave way to despondency when he saw what deso-

lations war was making in our land, and what responsibilities rested on him for the preservation of the Union. After uttering a playful anecdote to one who called to see him on business, his countenance suddenly assumed a grave aspect as he added, "If it were not for this occasional vent, I should die." His great, but simple and kind heart, beat in sympathy for all, especially for the soldier. On one occasion he said, "How willingly would I exchange to-day with the soldier who sleeps on the ground in the army of the Potomac." He now sleeps in the great army of the dead. And it is with sadness that we let the rumor fly to the old world that our Chief Magistrate was assassinated in our Republic. Although we mourn his death, especially the manner of his death, yet our country will live; its institutions are sustained not by one man; the hearts of the people are its pillars. Let us raise ourselves above party, and consecrate ourselves anew on our country's altar which has smoked with so many noble victims.

A Spartan mother stood at the gate of her city to inquire of a messenger the tidings from the battle field. With beating heart she cried, "How has the battle gone?" Supposing maternal affection uppermost in her thoughts, he answered, "Thy three sons are slain." "I asked not for my sons, but for my country," was her indignant reply, "How stand the arms of Sparta?" We can bear the loss of individuals, but how stands our country, should be our chief solicitude. Eli of old sat still when the death of his sons was announced. But when it was added, "The ark of God is taken," he fell backward, and his neck was broken.

How poor a trifle is office and honor! Our chief officers of Government hunted wild like beasts, assaulted, slain! John Quincy Adams says that the four years that he was President of the United States were the most unhappy years of his life. Our chief Executive on his way to the capital to take his seat four years since, after escaping repeated plots to take his life, was obliged to flee by night for safety from Baltimore to Washington. Then with what cares and anxieties and perplexities and dangers have those years been filled! The people honor him again

with the highest office, and the shouts of victory and applause go up from one party. Then they rejoice with him, yea, with their brethren of other parties, that our arms had triumphed—that our dear old flag waved over Richmond—the Rebellion was at an end, and peace and right were to take the place of war and violence. The cannon's mouth uttered her loud voice, bells rung and chimed their joy, and flags floated from hillocks and houses, and tree-top and balcony and battlement and spire. How evanescent are all earthly joys! Party applause is stifled and choked with sobs and grief for the loss of one they loved. Flags are lowered—bells change their tone to tolling—the hoarse cannon is silent, or else howling its sad wailings that Abraham Lincoln is shot, and the land is draped with mourning. God grant that violence may cease, that the majesty of law and order may rise above passion, and the bow of peace span the dark retreating cloud, proclaiming that the fierce tempest that has been upon us has passed away. Amen.







